

U3A Canterbury & District

34th Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the online AGM April 14th 2021 14.00 hours

82 Members attended, including the committee.

Apologies were received in advance from Liliias Adamson, Carol Appleyard, Ann Bignold, Shirley Brittain, Fiona Chapman, Sue Flynn, Caroline Galbraith, Irene Hall, Elizabeth Lewis, Philip Lewis, Maggs Mackechnie, John Paterson, Tracey Reed, Madeline Richardson, Amber Sinclair, Maria Thomas, Marion Walter.

1. The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced the online meeting.
2. Apologies have been received in advance via email
3. Acceptance of Minutes Chris Plant

The AGM held in July 2020 was only attended by the committee in response to Covid-19 advice from TAT. The minutes were accepted by the committee at that time and placed on the website for members to read. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Angela Tippet and seconded by Mary Laslett.

4. Approval of Annual Accounts 2020 Trevor Peel

2020 has been challenging, and Keith Watson has managed a juggling act to balance income and expenditure with negligible fees income during many changes of Government advice to manage the risk of COVID. It was essential to ensure that at the end of the financial year we would have sufficient funds in the bank to enable us to be able to fund likely activities in 2021. The 2020 accounts show that we have been successful in this endeavour. Expenditure was reduced from the original budget of £64,030 to £23,907 mainly from an Orange St 3-month rental holiday and some £15,000 refunds from cancelled hall rents. We had started free Zoom courses and virtual meetings and these had been well received by members. Revenue was some £30,000 less than originally budgeted, but our Gift Aid claim of some £3085 was successful.

A copy of the accounts, together with the Account Examiner's Report was placed on the u3a Canterbury and District website on the 15th and 16th March respectively, and the AGM is recommended to approve them.

With regard to financial planning for 2021 Trevor Peel said that the committee had assumed a very cautious approach. Provision had been made for some face-to-face meetings to start in Autumn 2021 and a programme of Zoom courses had been run in the first few months of 2021 and more are planned in the summer. A concern had been whether there would be a significant loss of members renewing this year. Fortunately, nearly 200 more have renewed than were budgeted for, and this means that our current financial position is cautiously optimistic.

Questions: Will there be a charge for Zoom courses?

Reply: (Keith Watson) The answer to this will be available after the June committee meeting, as by then the future should be clearer. There is a balance to be struck between charging fees for Zoom and other courses, and potentially lower costs from fewer Hall bookings. The crucial factor was that we need to have at least £30,000 in the Lloyds bank account at the end of December in order to pay major items of expenditure arising early in 2022, prior to subs income being received during late February/March 2022. On the other hand, he did not want to raise money unnecessarily resulting in excess funds in the account.

Q: Was Gift Aid unexpected?

A: No, it was planned over the years since 2018, based on 25% of Subs (Fees don't qualify) and about 49% of members signing up.

Q: Can an individual check their Gift Aid status?

A: NB The answer given to this question at the meeting has been later amended. The actual answer is that a member's Gift Aid status was included in their renewal letters; but that if anyone isn't sure or wishes to sign up, then an email to the membership secretary at mems@u3acanterbury.org.uk will provide the information needed and an opportunity to join.

Q: Who is our landlord at the Orange Street office?

A: The Canterbury Festival Trust

Acceptance of the Financial Report

Proposer: Robert Newport Seconder: Rosie Budd

There was a poll of members to approve the accounts. It was unanimous in favour.

5. Appointment of Jonathan Butchers as Accounts Examiner for the year 2021/2022 – Keith Watson

Proposer: Jack Reason Seconder: Judy Young

There was a poll of members to approve JB as our independent examiner. It was unanimous in favour.

6. The Chair's Report. – Chris Plant

Chris Plant delivered the Chair's report in which she said that 2020 had been a very difficult year. Covid had meant that all face to face meetings had been cancelled and the committee had adopted Zoom instead. The 2020 AGM had been held in committee in July, tutors had adopted Zoom as the medium for delivering courses, and the monthly meetings had also been delivered this way. Contact with members was a priority and a letter from the Chair and The Bulletin had been sent by email each month and posted to members without email. She thanked the committee for all their hard work, and the members for their loyalty.

A member put in the chat room to everyone, 'The committee can be very proud of the service you have provided over the past year. I'm sure that all members are very grateful and feel very cared for.'

Bob Newport offered a vote of thanks.

7. The Courses Report – Ursula Steiger

Ursula Steiger delivered the courses report which was well-received. In it she said that the beginning of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had made it difficult to imagine how our u3a could continue to provide members with learning opportunities. However, with imagination and perseverance, we managed to make Zoom a tool for spreading skills and knowledge; and tutors and many members made great efforts to get to grips with the technology involved. Members who for various reasons do not have access to online services were contacted by phone and monthly by post.

In the summer of 2020, our programme was much reduced for a short while; however, in the autumn we ran around 20 courses, and in the winter going into 2021, 45 courses and activities were run on Zoom.

Whatever the future holds, we are ready with guidelines for covid safety and hope that the second half of 2021 will bring opportunities for members to meet safely in person.

8. Election of Committee Members – Miriam Westendarp

Two committee members, David Clarke as Vice-Chair and Pam McGregor as Director of Studies, have stood down after years of excellent service. David's contribution to the IT progress of our u3a has been outstanding; and an indication of the strength of Pam's contribution is seen by the role now being divided between two members of the committee.

Miriam Westendarp read the list of current committee members, and a poll was taken to re-elect them. These are (in alphabetical order): Mary Laslett Christine Plant, Ursula Steiger, Christo Thiaradt, Angela Tippett and Miriam Westendarp.

Proposer Janet Potter; Seconder: Diane Billam.

There was a poll of the members, which was unanimously in favour.

Miriam then named new members to be elected:

- I. Jane Dennett
The proposer is Ursula Steiger The Seconder is Robert Potter
- II. Trevor Peel
The Proposer is Keith Watson The Seconder is Jean Caws
- III. Robert Matthews
The Proposer is Janet Linington The Seconder is Christine Cayley

There was a poll of the members, which was unanimously in favour.

9. Proposal to reappoint Keith Watson as Treasurer – Chris Plant
Proposer: Christo Thiaradt Seconder: Jayne Cohen

There was a poll of the members, which was unanimously in favour.

10. Proposal to reappoint Ursula Steiger as President – Chris Plant

Proposer: John Shirland Seconder: Janet Scott

There was a poll of members, which was unanimously in favour.

11. AOB

No AOB having been received in advance of the meeting, Chris Plant thanked all attendees for their co-operation during a difficult year and closed the meeting at 2.50pm.

Cindy Van Ebo offered a vote of thanks to Chris, saying that members should be aware of the massive amount of work Chris puts in to keep things going, her love, generosity and dedication, and it was generally agreed that Chris had been the right person to have in that key role during these Covid times.

Date of next AGM – Wednesday 13th April, 2022